

Coming Soon...

A Pennsylvania fastener factory will relocate to Leland Industrial Park, bringing 50 new jobs. Page 3-A.

Fancy Footwork

Brunswick County high schools expand their soccer programs with a full schedule this season. Page 12-B.

A 'Reel Chase'

A pair of local fishermen bring home the gold in the Myrtle Beach Open King Tournament. Page 11-C.

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Carolina Blythe Owner Refutes Engineers' Comments About Plant's Condition, Value

BY ERIC CARLSON

Hired consultants have misled Calabash officials about the value and condition of the Carolina Blythe Utility Co. in an effort to convince the town to build a sewer system that is larger than it needs, the company's owner charged last week.

Carolina Blythe president Billy Burnett said Powell Associates engineers "ought to be fired" for recommending that the town contract with a South Carolina firm for temporary sewage disposal capacity that his Calabash treatment plant could provide for less money.

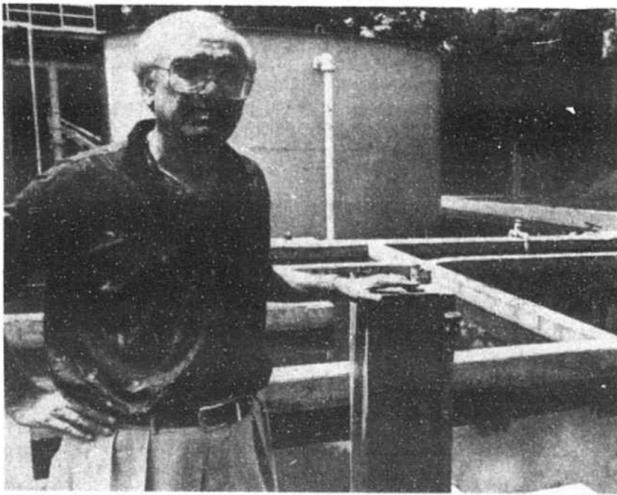
Burnett vehemently denied accusations about his company made by Powell engineers at a town board meeting last week. He said consultants Joe Tombro and Jim Billups are trying to discourage the purchase of his sewage system—which currently serves about 1,000 Calabash residents—so they can earn higher fees for putting together a regional system with Sunset Beach.

"I have an ax to grind. I want to sell this company," Burnett said. "But that engineer does too. He wants to guarantee the most fees for his company."

"And I have no problem with that. But this is the most serious decision the town will make. They need to have someone from the outside take a look at it," Burnett said.

At the board's Aug. 10 meeting, Tombro told the commissioners that the Carolina Blythe collection system has "high infiltration problems" that could saddle the town with costly inspections and repairs. In support of their claim, Billups said he had recently observed "sewage running out on the ground" at the company's treatment plant.

Burnett says that's not true. He said Billups and a representative of the Farmers Home Administration visited the plant after "the



BILLY BURNETT, owner of the Carolina Blythe Utility Co., stands beside one of the filters at his Carolina Shores sewage treatment plant, which he called "one of the finest in the state."

biggest rain in years," when storm water overflowed the town's drainage ditches and backed up onto the plant site, preventing the treated discharge from flowing into the canal that normally carries it to the Waccamaw River.

"No raw sewage escaped. What overflowed was the same treated and chlorinated effluent that flows into that canal every day," Burnett said. "They've taken that and twisted it without ever talking to me or to my plant operator to find out what happened."

He also disputed the engineers' suggestion that Carolina Blythe's collection pipes are deteriorating or poorly fitted, allowing storm water to flow in and overload the plant's treatment capacity. Billups said after the meeting that the town could end up spending \$150,000 "just to identify the problems."

Burnett said his pipes "do not leak" and his system "does not

have an infiltration problem." He said the Carolina Blythe lines employ the same quality PVC pipe that would be used in the new system proposed by Powell Associates.

Households that receive water and sewer service from Carolina Blythe used an average of 150 gallons of water per day between May, 1992, and June, 1993, Burnett said. Treatment plant records show that an average of 128 gallons per household—about 85 percent of that inflow—went out through the sewer system during that period.

"The state uses 85 percent as the rule of thumb for how much water usage normally goes into the sewer," Burnett said. "So how can I have infiltration? The plant flows almost become nil after midnight. How is it possible that significant infiltration exists when late night flows go down to almost nothing? Does infiltration only take place

during daylight hours?"

Burnett also criticized Powell and Associates for excluding Carolina Blythe from bidding on the temporary sewage disposal capacity that would be needed if Calabash and Sunset build their joint sewerage project. Current plans call for construction of a line into South Carolina to carry waste water from downtown Calabash to the Little River Water and Sewer Co.

He said Carolina Blythe could provide the same temporary service for 19 percent less than Little River. Using the local plant also would save Calabash \$60,000 on forced main piping into South Carolina, Burnett said.

Paying the usage fees to a company that already serves much of the town, also "would help reduce any approved service rate increases by Carolina Blythe," which he said would benefit customers in Carolina Shores instead of those in another state.

"If a doctor gave you that kind of advice, you'd accuse him of malpractice, wouldn't you?" he said.

When he first learned about the temporary disposal plan through an article in the *Beacon*, Burnett said he called Calabash Commissioner Jon Sanborn to ask why Carolina Blythe wasn't considered for the contract. He said Sanborn told him he did not know and furnished Burnett with information to help him prepare a bid, which Burnett gave to Sanborn before the Aug. 10 meeting.

After Sanborn read Burnett's lower offer to the commissioners, Billups advised the board to "do it. Don't hesitate." He said the engineers had not sought a bid from Carolina Blythe because of a strongly worded statement Burnett issued at a commissioners meeting last March indicating that the company was "no longer willing to negotiate with the town's paid consultant." (See BURNETT, Page 2-A)

Meeting, Hearing Referendum Are Upcoming Hurdles For Sewer Proposal

BY LYNN CARLSON

Consultants seeking central sewer funds for Sunset Beach and Calabash hope to leave a Raleigh meeting today (Thursday) with a commitment for approximately \$9 million in federal Farmers Home Administration grants and loans.

Today's meeting—between Powell Associates consultants Jim Billups and Joe Tombro and representatives of FmHA, the state Division of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Local Government Commission—is the first of three tall, closely spaced hurdles to be cleared before the two towns can activate their water and sewer authority and begin constructing a system.

The second is DEM's Sept. 1 public hearing in Raleigh regarding which North Carolina towns should receive low-interest state loans for wastewater system construction, though the state is yet to learn how much federal money will be made available to the loan program.

Sunset Beach and Calabash are seeking \$7.5 million each to be repaid at an interest rate of less than 3 percent. They are currently the highest-ranked among small, unsewered communities ready to receive wastewater funding and are likely to maintain priority status in the new funding year, Billups said, "provided nothing at the public hearing throws up a roadblock."

The final hurdle will be bond referendums in both towns, probably in late November or early December, on the sewer question.

If approval comes through from both funding sources and voters in both towns, the consultants say the sewer system's design and construction permits can be obtained by

April or May of 1994. They say the cost of constructing the system and repaying the loans can be covered through user fees of about \$18 per household per month for a "typical two-bedroom permanent year-round residence having a wastewater flow of 5,000 gallons per month."

If either FmHA or DEM declines to fund the towns' plan, the consultants say the system would have to charge initial "impact fees" of "between \$0 and \$1,000," dependent upon household income.

Citizens' Committee Not Ready
Because of uncertainty about impact fees, Sunset Beach's Citizens Wastewater Advisory Board declined Monday night to make a final recommendation to the town council on how the town should proceed.

The committee, appointed by Mayor Mason Barber, has been studying the sewer issue for more than a year.

"We can't make any recommendation based on 'maybe this, maybe that,'" committee chairman George Knott said. "The impact fee question is very important to the people we'll be asking to vote for this in a referendum."

Member Al Consalvi concurred, adding, "if it's zero to a thousand, people will assume it's not going to be zero."

Billups said the towns' ability to pay back the loans without charging impact fees would be contingent upon participation by both funding agencies, plus eventual mandatory sewer hookups for all households in the initial service area—Calabash and Sunset Beach business districts, the island of Sunset Beach and several mainland developments.

"We need the user base to make it" (See SEWER, Page 2-A)

Barks, Bangs And Boom Boxes Are Targets Of Draft Noise Law

BY ERIC CARLSON

Has the constant barking of a neighbor's dog made you a prisoner in your own home? Are you being jolted out of bed at dawn every morning by banging and sawing from a nearby construction site?

Is your "quiet, comfort or repose" being "unreasonably disturbed" by the loud music pounding from the window next door?

If so, you will be happy to learn that the Brunswick County Commissioners are considering a new law that will make such disturbances illegal and subject noise-makers to civil or criminal prosecution.

In response to numerous citizen complaints, the board recently asked county Planning Director John Harvey to research and develop a noise regulation ordinance for

the unincorporated areas of Brunswick County. A draft of the proposed law was presented to the commissioners at their regular meeting Monday night.

Harvey told the board that he had used noise ordinances from other counties as a guide for drafting the proposed law, with advice from the N.C. League of Municipalities, the Institute of Government at Chapel Hill and the N.C. Association of County Commissioners.

Instead of taking a technical approach to noise regulation, by using sound measuring equipment to establish evidence of a violation, the proposed ordinance uses "a general standard capable of determination by an objective, detached, reasonable person as to prohibit loud or disturbing noise."

Harvey said such standards are less likely to be suc-

cessfully challenged in court, adding that it "puts the burden on the sheriff" to enforce the law.

The draft ordinance would make it unlawful for anyone to keep a dog or any other animal "which, by frequent or habitual howling, yelping, barking or otherwise, causes loud noises and produces seriously annoying disturbance to any other person in the neighborhood."

It would prohibit the operation of any motor vehicle that has had its muffler, exhaust system or other noise control equipment "removed, altered or maintained in such disrepair as to create loud and disturbing noises."

The operation of construction machinery, chain saws or "garage machinery" would be prohibited between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. Lawn mowers and other "domestic tools" could not be used out-of-doors between 9:30 p.m.

and 6:30 a.m.

The law also would make it illegal to yell, shout, whistle, sing or play any radio, television, "phonograph amplifier system," tape recorder or musical instruments in such a manner "as to unreasonably annoy or disturb the quiet, comfort or repose of a person."

Creating a noise near a school, public library, hospital, court or church that "unreasonably interferes with work or worship" also would be prohibited.

Under the proposed law, special permits could be obtained from the sheriff's department at least 15 days in advance for rock concerts, political gatherings, religious gatherings and other "free speech" activities requiring the use of sound amplification equipment.

The law would make it the responsibility of a landlord (See COUNTY, Page 2-A)

Shalotte Woman Reported Missing; Police Say Foul Play Not Suspected

Shalotte Police do not suspect "foul play" in the disappearance of a Brierwood Estates woman who has not been seen or heard from since Aug. 9.

Cathlean E. "Corky" Peterson of 97 Country Club Drive was reported

missing last Wednesday by her husband, Dwight Peterson.

Authorities believe she has not left the area. "We're not expecting any foul play at this time," Shalotte Police Chief Rodney Gause said Tuesday. "We just have an open mind about it, waiting for her to call."

The 55-year-old white female is 5 feet, 4 inches, tall and 130 pounds. She has reddish blond hair, green eyes and a light complexion.

The Petersons have lived in Shalotte for approximately 10 years. "She was last seen leaving Brierwood," Gause said. "No letters, no calls or anything."

Peterson was last seen Aug. 9 around 2:40 p.m. She left home driving a 1992 Pontiac Grand Am. The teal green, four-door vehicle has a North Carolina license plate FVX-110.

She was wearing green pants with stripes and a green shirt at the time of her disappearance.

"She took a few clothes with her," Gause said. "I still think she's close by the area. The reason I say that is she took her bathing suit with her."

Peterson has relatives in Wisconsin and California, but they say they have not heard from her, Gause said.

Gause said police have entered the license plate number and woman's name in the National Crime Information Computer (NCIC) in case the vehicle is located or the woman is found.

"Right now we just have to wait and see what will happen. Time will tell us," Gause said.

The chief said he thinks the woman is in the area because she did not have enough money with her to travel. "I think she's going to be close by. I just got that feeling."

Anyone with information on the case is asked to call the Shalotte Police Department at 919-754-6008.



PETERSON



Tropical Storm Brett

Brett Fulford of Holden Beach explodes through the lip of a wave at Holden Beach Fishing Pier Saturday afternoon. The unexpected swell may have been generated by a tropical storm of the same name that passed through the Caribbean Sea last week.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

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